

Mian language

Mian is an Ok language spoken in the Telefomin district of the Sandaun province in Papua New Guinea by the Mian people. It has some 3,500 speakers spread across two dialects: *West Mian* (a.k.a. *Suganga*), with approximately 1,000 speakers in around Yapsiei, and *East Mian*, with approximately 2,500 speakers in and around Timeilmin, Temsakmin, Sokamin, Gubil, Fiak and Hotmin.^[2] Phonologically, Mian is very similar to other Papuan languages in the size of its phoneme inventory, but it nevertheless has some peculiarities, such as its contrast between a plain [a] and a pharyngealized [a^ɣ]. It is also a tonal language.

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Phonology

Vowels

Mian has 6 vowels, including the pharyngealized open front vowel.

	Front	Back
	Unrounded	Rounded
<u>Close</u>	i /i/	u /u/
<u>Close-mid</u>		o /o/
<u>Open-mid</u>	e /ɛ/	
<u>Open</u>	a /a/ aa /a ^ɣ /	

And 4 diphthongs:

Mian	
Native to	Papua New Guinea
Region	Sandaun province, Telefomin district
Ethnicity	Mianmin
Native speakers	from 1,400 (2000 census) ^[1] to 3,500 (2007) ^[2]
Language family	Trans–New Guinea <ul style="list-style-type: none">Central & South New Guinea ?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ok<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mountain<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mian
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	mpt – inclusive code Individual code: sug – Suganga
Glottolog	mian1255 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/mian1255) ^[3]

Ending with /i/	Ending with /u/
ai /áĩ/	au /áu/
ei /éĩ/	ou /óũ/

/ɛ/ is realized as [ə] in word-initial low-tone syllables, [ɛ] elsewhere.

/a/ is realized as [ə] in unaccented syllables, [ə] in word-initial low-tone syllables beginning with a consonant, [a] elsewhere.

/o/ is realized as [ɔ] in word-initial low-tone syllables and in syllables ending in a voiceless plosive or [ŋ], [o] elsewhere.

/u/ is realized as [ʊ] in word-initial low-tone syllables, [u] elsewhere.

Consonants

Mian has 15 consonants:

		<u>Bilabial</u>	<u>Labiodental</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>		<u>Glottal</u>
						<u>Plain</u>	<u>Labialized</u>	
<u>Plosive</u>	<u>Voiceless</u>			t /t/		k /k/	kw /kʷ/	
	<u>Voiced</u>	b /b/		d /d/		g /g/	gw /gʷ/	
<u>Nasal</u>		m /m/		n /n/		ng /ŋ/		
<u>Fricative</u>			f /f/	s /s/				h /h/
<u>Approximant</u>				l /l/	y /j/		w /w/	

/b/ is realized as [ᵐb] word-initially, [pʰ] or [p̚] syllable-finally, [b] elsewhere.

Examples: **banǎn** [ᵐbànǎn] *lower arm*, **mǎab** [mǎː : p̚] *frog*, **tebǎl** [tʰɛ̀bǎl] *ant*

/t/ is realized as [tʰ] before vowels, [tʰ] or [t̚] syllable-finally.

Examples: **tam** [tʰàm] *temple*, **mát** [mát̚] *gall bladder*

/k/ is realized as [kʰ] before vowels, [kʰ] or [k̚] syllable-finally, sometimes [x] between vowels, [qʰ] before [aː].

Examples: **kemin** [kʰèmìn] *to do*, **manggǎk** [màngǎk̚] *bee*, **okok** [òxòk̚] *work*, **kaawá** [qʰàː wá] *steel axe*

/g/ is realized as [ŋg] word-initially, [g] elsewhere.

Examples: **gát** [ŋgát̚] *mole*, **manggǎk** [màngǎk̚] *bee*

/gʷ/ is realized as [ŋgʷ] word-initially, [gʷ] elsewhere.

Examples: **gwaán** [ŋgʷàán] *spider*, **gwalgwal** [ŋgʷàlgʷàl] *twins*

Tones

Mian has 5 tonemes:

Tone	Example
Low	am [àm] <i>house</i>
High	án [án] <i>arrow</i>
Low-High	ǎam [ǎ̌ : m] <i>Pandanus species</i>
High-Low	hâs [hâs] <i>hat</i>
Low-High-Low	aam [ǎ̌ : m̌] <i>older sister</i>

The tones of Mian are very complex, as they are subject to various phonological processes, and furthermore, they can be used for indicating various grammatical aspects, especially in connection with verbs, where the tones are crucial for understanding.

Consider the two verb forms below, being non-hodiernal and imperfective respectively:

dolâbibe [dòlábíbè] *I wrote*

dolâbibe [dòlábíbè] *I am writing*

Nouns

Large objects in Mianmin are feminine, while small objects are masculine.^[4]

(1)

imen-e

/taro-**M**/

'small/one taro'

(2)

imen-o

/taro-**F**/

'large taro/large quantity of taro'

References

1. Mian (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/mpt/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
Suganga (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/sug/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
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Digital resources

- Fedden, Sebastian; Timothy Feist; Matthew Baerman; Greville G. Corbett; Gunter Senft (2015). *Mian and Kilivila Collection* (<http://www.smg.surrey.ac.uk/collection>). University of Surrey. doi:10.15126/SMG.30/1 (<https://doi.org/10.15126%2FSMG.30%2F1>).
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